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ABSTRACT

AMONG THE DUALISMS PLAGUING CONTEMPORARY EDUCATORS ARE THE SEPARATION BETWEEN PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE EDUCATION, THE OBSCURITY BETWEEN NONINSTRUCTIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL TASKS, AND THE ISSUES OF CERTIFICATION AND PROFESSIONALISM. THOSE TASKS WHICH RELATE TO OR INVOLVE LEARNERS IN ANY WAY ARE "INSTRUCTIONS," AND THE "EDUCATIONAL WORKER" INVOLVED WITH CHILDREN TO THE EXTENT THAT HE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR IN SOME WAY IS A "TEACHER" WHETHER HE IS AIDE, ASSISTANT, STUDENT TEACHER, TUTOR, FULL-TIME INSTRUCTOR, OR SPECIALIST. STANDARDS IN THE PROFESSIONAL LIVES OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS SHOULD BE FOCUSED UPON AND RAISED IN FOUR AREAS: (1) IDENTIFICATION OF TALENT, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTION; (2) INITIAL PREPARATION AS WELL AS RETRAINING, WITH THE ARTIFICIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE ELIMINATED; (3) WORKING CONDITIONS, SUCH AS WORK LOADS, NUMBERS OF STUDENTS, LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY, PLANNING PERIODS, AND THE TOTAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT; AND (4) RETENTION OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS AS CAREERISTS THROUGH RAISING STANDARDS OF SALARY AND BENEFITS. THE MOST MEANINGFUL KIND OF CERTIFICATION IS "SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION," I.E., FOR AN AREA OF PREPARATION (SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION) RATHER THAN LEVELS (PROVISIONAL, STANDARD, ADVANCED). THE "PROFESSIONAL" IS ONE WHO RECEIVES ADEQUATE REMUNERATION FOR THE SERVICES HE PERFORMS--AND HE SHOULD BE PAID ON THE BASIS OF EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION, NOT ON THAT OF OBSERVABLE PERFORMANCE OR LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY. (JS)

QuEST PAPER ON PARAPROFESSIONALS AND PROFESSIONALISM

OCCASIONAL PAPERS FROM THE AFT PROGRAM FOR QUALITY EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN TEACHING (QuEST)

8

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EDUCATION'S NEW DUALISMS

(A Provocative Essay on Paraprofessionals and Professionalism)

Dr. Robert D. Bhaerman
Director of Research

A new and broader dimension was quickly added to this paper, originally intended to be a description of the problems and potentials in the use of auxiliary personnel in the schools. It soon became obvious that several fundamental problems exist which underlie those dealing with auxiliaries and new careerists in education.

These more basic issues are akin to the educational dualisms which the progressive educators identified one and two generations ago and which essentially remain unresolved: the separation between ends and means, moral development and intellectual training, life and work, and school and society. As is standard with Dewey, he treated as dichotomies matters which others treated as dualisms.

Today, other kinds of dualisms can be identified which plague contemporary educators. The most obvious is the separation between preservice and inservice education. While both are recognized as essential ingredients of a teacher's total preparation, the line that marks the end of one and the beginning of the other is not as precise as it appears at first glance. I contend that it would make more sense to recognize that from the moment a person begins to deal with children, even on a part-time or student-teaching basis, he is actually <u>in</u> service. If we begin to think of teacher-education programs in more unified terms for those certificated and those not yet certificated, the troublesome problem of teacher recruitment might well be alleviated. However, when we think in unified terms, a number of provocative questions are encountered. One of the first is the obscurity which exists between the noninstructional and instructional tasks.

Noninstructional and instructional tasks. For many years, the AFT has been engaged very successfully in the struggle to remove nonessential tasks from the workday of the teachers. Illustrative of this is the provision from the collective-bargaining contract recently negotiated by the Washington, D.C., Teachers Union, AFT Local 6, in which 20 clerical-type tasks are identified in the clause dealing with relief from nonteaching duties. But the clear definitions in the D.C. contract are not evident in much of the other kinds of materials which cross my desk dealing with auxiliary personnel. Many tasks defined as noninstructional are anything but. For example, in *New Careers: Position Descriptions* (published by the New Careers Development Program, University Research Corporation, Washington, D.C.), noninstructional aides include such roles as maintaining order while traveling on field trips, operating filmstrips, grading test papers (using the teacher's key), supervising cleanup time, maintaining order in the classroom in the teacher's absence, and supervising classes according to the regular teacher's suggestions.

From my understanding of the teaching-learning process, I always have assumed that attitudes are involved in maintaining order, in that children

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learn not only by doing, but by seeing, by example, and by adult illustration. Maintaining order, therefore, to me, falls clearly in the instructional realm. So does operating filmstrips since, as I recall from my own classroom experience, a continued dialogue often exists between the operator and the class. Or it should. As far as grading test papers is concerned, after reading Banesh Hoffmann's *The Tyranny of Testing,* I am unconvinced that an "objective" test can be successfully graded without the teacher himself reacting, especially to those test items marked "wrong." If you have read Hoffmann's book, you will know what I mean. Supervision, too, even if it involves such a relatively simple act as putting paints away, implies the necessity of discipline if need be. Discipline surely cannot be conceived as noninstructional, no matter how you define it. Or so it seems to me.

In *New Careers: Position Descriptions,* other duties are set forth for auxiliary personnel. The school day-care aide would supervise rest periods, help in toilet activities, help young children dress and undress, and would check for good seating arrangements. Again, it seems to me that supervision, even of a rest period, obviously involves handling children, discipline, and attitudes. Checking seating arrangements implies, to me, the need to diagnose instructional problems and establish instructional goals for individual students. (Incidentally, many of the tasks listed for noninstructional aides are beautiful illustrations of what even young children can do as part of their school activities. I am afraid that we take away from children many wonderful opportunities for their growth. For example, aides would duplicate classroom newspapers, write for materials, and help prepare audiovisual materials; media aides would collect pictures and prepare bulletin-board displays--learning activities from which many elementary school children can profit.)

According to data reported from the Norfolk, Va., city schools, duties of aides include scheduling the use of audiovisual materials and assisting small groups with minor academic problems. The act of scheduling the use of learning materials is related (or should be) to the needs of children. Identification of such needs is clearly of an instructional nature. A number of school districts, including Arlington County in Virginia, identify the position of "instructional secretary." For the most part, the duties are essentially clerical, but the very title creates confusion. Are they instructional aides or are they secretaries?

The New York State Education Department, in a survey conducted several years ago, listed under clerical duties of teacher aides such duties as checking workbooks, contacting parents, and preparing worksheets for lessons. Fifteen duties were listed for noninstructional supervisors, an ironic term in that it seems highly unlikely that supervision can be noninstructional as long as living and breathing children are involved. Under the term "technical helpers," this activity is listed: helping children with workbooks and with finger painting. (I hope that not too much help is given with the finger painting, for we all have seen too many people who literally direct children's fingers rather than guide them to arrive independently and creatively at their own compositions.)

A more recent and detailed analysis was made in 1967 by the New England Educational Assessment Project. The following figures are highly relevant; they represent the percentage of teacher aides performing certain duties. At least 75 percent of the time these duties occur:

- Teaching one or more classes: approximately 10 percent in the elementary school and 7 percent in the secondary school;

- Assisting the teacher with large lessons and demonstrations: approximately 30 percent in the elementary school and 12 percent in the secondary school;

- Conducting small-group drills: approximately 36 percent in the elementary school and 10 percent in the secondary school;

- Correcting workbooks: approximately 39 percent in the elementary school and 11 percent in the secondary school; and

- Helping the individual child with his lesson: approximately 46 percent in the elementary school and 23 percent in the secondary school.[1]

In another phase of this survey, one state association respondent wrote that "nonprofessional personnel shall be employed in local school systems only for work which involves no teaching responsibilities;" another wrote that teacher aides "should not engage in any instructional activities." I wish it were that simple.

This extensive elaboration illustrates the need to distinguish more clearly between the various kinds of tasks performed in schools by paraprofessionals and professionals. I would maintain that those tasks which relate to or involve learners in any way are, in essence, instructional. If a person performs such tasks as grading multiple-choice or true/false tests, maintaining order, and supervising children, he is performing instructional tasks and, in effect, is a teacher of children.

When does one become a teacher? One of the most widely recognized and authoritative sources in educational research is N. L. Gage's *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. In it, Gage defines teaching in the following terms: "Any interpersonal influence aimed at changing the ways in which other persons can or will behave..." and, further,

> The behavior producing the influence on another person may be 'frozen' (so to speak) in the form of printed material, film, or the program of a teaching machine, but it is considered behavior nonetheless.
>
> The behaviors and intervening variables mediating them (such as abilities, habits, or attitudes) may be classified in many ways, such as the 'cognitive,' 'affective,' and 'psychomotor'.[2]

In defining and, hopefully, stabilizing the concept of a teacher, I would submit that a person involved with children to the extent that he has the opportunity to influence behavior in some way operates, in essence, as a teacher. Granted, this is a broad conception, but the teaching act can hardly be conceived strictly in terms of imparting knowledge--and nothing more. Rather, the process is composed of a totality of activities and behaviors.

Traditionally, the teacher has been defined strictly, and, as I assume, legally, in terms of certification. But do we mean standard certification or something less: temporary, initial, provisional, emergency, interim, etc? Anyone familiar with certification is aware of the extreme variation which exists from state to state in name, number, and type, as well as in purpose and philosophy. As T.M. Stinnett, the former TEPS executive secretary, points out, the names of certificates tend to carry no clear delineation of meaning in the minds of either professionals or the public:

> Programs of preparation, even for certificates whose names connote standard levels of preparation, vary so widely as to negate the principle that there is an essentially basic preparation for teaching.[3]

Does the broad conception of the teaching process imply that we must certificate everyone who relates to children in some way, e.g., aides, assistants, student teachers, volunteers, lay readers, tutors? (Custodians and secretaries have been known to relate to children on occasion.) On the contrary. I believe it really means that we should ask ourselves this question: *Are we in education making too much of certification?* Harold Taylor seems to think so. He has written:

> I would also like to see everyone in education spend a great deal less time discussing certification requirements and all the rules about them and free themselves for more time to raise questions about what they should be doing to make education interesting and engrossing to those undergoing it. Certification is a bookkeeping problem and should be treated that way....
>
> The fallacy in taking the whole apparatus of licensure so seriously is that education itself is already too formally conceived. What we need is not more rules and administration but more excitement and display of intellectual energy.[4]

Does it really make that much difference if one receives his initial license after he has received a master's rather than a bachelor's degree? Unfortunately, little research exists in this area. The *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, 3rd edition, reports that "It seems fair to say that the effectiveness of certification requirements has not been studied in any experimental sense." (Mitzell)

If there is to be certification, and surely it is not about to fade away, the most meaningful kind probably is "specialty certification," i.e., for an area of preparation (science, mathematics, elementary education, etc.) rather than levels (provisional, standard, advanced, etc.). Changes in certification laws should focus upon the specialties needed in schools for the 1970s and beyond.

Obviously, consideration of matters such as these leads logically to another set of questions, beginning with the following:

When does one become a professional and, as before, *are we in education also making too much of professionalism?* Again, does one become a professional when he receives his certificate? But which certificate? Turning again to T.M. Stinnett, we find that he has elaborated eight characteristics of a profession,

several of which are so obvious as to render them meaningless. The eight characteristics are:

1. A profession involves activities essentially intellectual.

2. A profession commands a body of specialized knowledge.

3. A profession requires extended professional (as contrasted with solely general) preparation.

4. A profession demands continuous inservice growth.

5. A profession affords a life career and permanent membership.

6. A profession sets up its own standards.

7. A profession exalts service above personal gain.

8. A profession has a strong, closely knit, professional organization.[5]

Stinnett stresses, quite accurately, that professionally competent practitioners are sensitive to the necessity of keeping abreast of progress in their field. Interestingly, he goes on to say that for "fully qualified teachers, the problem of continuous growth should rest with them and local boards and not be enforced by certification." But, other than that, what else can be said about these eight points? Of course, teaching is intellectually oriented, although at times the separation between moral development and intellectual training is still all too evident. Teaching does command a body of specialized knowledge, although the gap between what one learns from school and from his society is entirely too wide. Teaching does require extended preparation, but it must be a realistic and practical preparation rather than solely an academic one. A profession does afford a life career; unfortunately, this one often is not accompanied by a living wage. A profession sets its own standards, but it often does so in the wrong areas and becomes bogged down on illusory issues. A profession exalts service above personal gain; no one would argue with this, nor with motherhood and the flag. A profession has a strong, closely knit organization or, in some cases, several. So here we are. But where? Does it really make that much difference if one can call himself a professional? As a matter of prestige and ego, it probably does, but is it not equally important to be recognized as a skilled artisan? Is the question of professionalism one which distracts us from the more significant and specific areas for which *standards must be raised, and raised now*?

Perhaps what we really need, then, is a more specific definition of a professional. I suggest that we consider the definition of a professional as one who receives adequate remuneration for the services he performs. Otherwise, he is an amateur. Why should not *all* those who are *in* service in schools in some fashion, part time or full time, be considered professionals in this sense and be paid wages for the services they render? As is the case now, student teachers and the growing number of women in school volunteer programs are engaged in a kind of slave labor, and they do so in the name of professionalism no less. *A new conception of educational personnel is needed.* I choose to call these personnel *educational workers*.

Educational workers. An educational worker is one who is engaged either part time or full time in an activity related to "interpersonal influence aimed at changing the ways in which other persons can or will behave"...in other words, engaged in teaching. They would be aides, assistants, student teachers (or more accurately, students-in-teaching), tutors, full-time instructors, and specialists of various kinds, etc. They would be paid. Through work-study and on-the-job training programs, their skills would grow continuously, as would their salaries. Schools would utilize many educational workers, for the process of education is diverse enough to require the skills and talents of many kinds of persons. Standards in the professional lives of educational workers would be focused upon and raised significantly in these four most vital areas:

1. Identification of talent, recruitment, and selection;

2. Initial preparation as well as retraining, with the artificial distinction between pre-service and in-service education eliminated;

3. Working conditions, such as work loads, numbers of students, length of the school day, planning periods, and the total school environment, conducive for high-level morale for workers and students; and

4. The retention of educational workers as careerists through raising standards of salary and benefits.

The processes of identification, recruitment, and selection must utilize the most sophisticated devices which can be developed in order to ascertain the diverse kinds of talent and raw material among this diverse body of workers. This is the joint responsibility of both preservice and inservice elements, that is, of both preparatory programs in colleges and later in the local school district. By directing the unique talents and energies of a massive number of people, a more effective attack could be launched on the learning problems of children. Educational workers would be evaluated, not as a punitive device as is often the case now, but for the same reason pupils are, or should be, evaluated: to identify strengths and weaknesses so that they can build their own learning programs. This would be true for both experienced and inexperienced workers.

As such growth programs are incorporated into collective-bargaining contracts, as working conditions, salaries, and benefits improve, educational workers will not need to flock to the sanctuaries of administration as so many teachers do now. It is essential, however, that meaningful degree programs, such as specialist in education, and doctor of education, be developed with colleges and universities, so that as many public-school workers would be able to study for advanced degrees as do their colleagues in higher education. But these programs must be oriented to the improvement of teaching skills, abilities, and specialties.

What of the certification of educational workers? It could be granted at the end of the fifth year of training in order to retain the professional symbol and satisfy state requirements. Actually, I doubt if it really matters that much. College teachers, doctors, lawyers, and others are considered professionals, not solely by virtue of their license (in fact, college professors are unlicensed), but by virtue of (1) their level of educational preparation (Ph.D.,

M.D., LL.B.) and (2) their total professional and other work experiences, both formal and informal.

On what basis should educational workers be paid? The previous discussion leads quite naturally to this major question. One current argument runs along the line that if some teachers were given salaries matching administrators, this would result in keeping them in teaching--teaching as a career. Unfortunately, only a very few teachers would reach the hallowed status of what is sometimes called the "master teacher" or "senior teacher." The majority would be blocked in their career-incentive goal since only a limited number of spots would be open at the top salary range. The proponents of the vertical hierarchy concept are deceiving others into thinking that gold lies at the end of the hierarchy. It may, but only for an incalculable few. The bulk of teachers would be unable to rise above current levels, for it is not always possible for adults with deeply implanted roots in a community to pack up their belongings and steal away to greener pastures. Should they move, they are likely to find the master-teacher slots in the new district also filled with loyal and politically-wise souls, locally grown.

Essentially, there are three alternatives for determining teacher salaries, none of which are wholly satisfactory, but one at least does have fewer problems than the others. The three are (1) on the basis of observable performance, (2) on the basis of level of responsibility, and (3) on the basis of experience and education.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the teaching process is so complex, the act composed of so many diverse tasks, and the truly significant goals so long range and of a deeply-rooted, *affective* nature, that to base increments on the basis of observable performance is not only beyond our grasp, but is philosophically untenable.

While we can measure how well classes increase their reading scores over a period of time, can we really measure the ingredients many teachers instill concomitantly: the love of learning, the hunger, the thirst, the questioning, the doubts, the skepticism, the attitude of never-being-satisfied-with-easy-answers? How does one measure these? Can acquired knowledge be parceled out, weighed and measured? What if you believe, as many educators do, that knowledge is the result and residue of one's total experience? Should we base salary increments on how well the *total* class achieves its goals? There are simply too many extraneous factors which influence children's learning and learning problems. Should we base salary on the level of a teacher's responsibility? This is hardly possible and for the same reason. The teaching process is much too diverse to be neatly compartmentalized. It is not inconceivable that a paraprofessional library aide or a noncertificated educational worker who lights a spark in a child by giving him the right book at the right time may be performing one of the most significant acts in the child's intellectual life during a school year. If knowledge is indeed the result and residue of one's experiences, which is of most worth, experiences provided by the staff teacher or master teacher? For all we know, maybe it was the intern who turned "that kid" on this year.

Basing salary on one's education and experience and on whether service is for full-time or part-time employment as an educational worker still is the most

reasonable criteria we have, in spite of some obvious weaknesses. These problems, however, can be overcome by programs for teachers based upon the assessment of their strengths and weaknesses, skills and abilities. When evaluation is used in *this* way, it need not be threatening to those involved.

The thesis presented in this essay may sound like heresy, since for generations we have put certification and professionalism on a sacrosanct pedestal. Mine is not an attempt to lower certification and professional standards. What I am suggesting is that we concentrate on raising standards relating to the more meaningful issues of education, and that we treat in a unified way matters which others treat as the new dualisms of education. By doing so, we would be building a *true profession*, based upon significant considerations and not shopworn clichés.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Teacher Aides in the Classroom: A New England Study*, prepared by the New England Educational Assessment Project. Providence, R.I., November, 1967, p. 18.

2. Gage, N. L. (editor), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1963, pp. 96-97.

3. Stinnett, T.M., *A Manual on Certification Requirements for School Personnel in the United States, 1967 edition*. Washington, D.C.: p. 3.

4. Taylor, Harold, *The World and the American Teacher*. Washington, D.C.: AACTE, pp. 200-21.

5. Stinnett, T.M., *Professional Problems of Teachers*, 3rd edition. New York: Macmillan, pp. 54-55.